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Spastics Society survey

Cigarettes should carry health warning for pregnant women

The Spastics Society wants a government health warning directed at pregnant women on all cigarette packets.

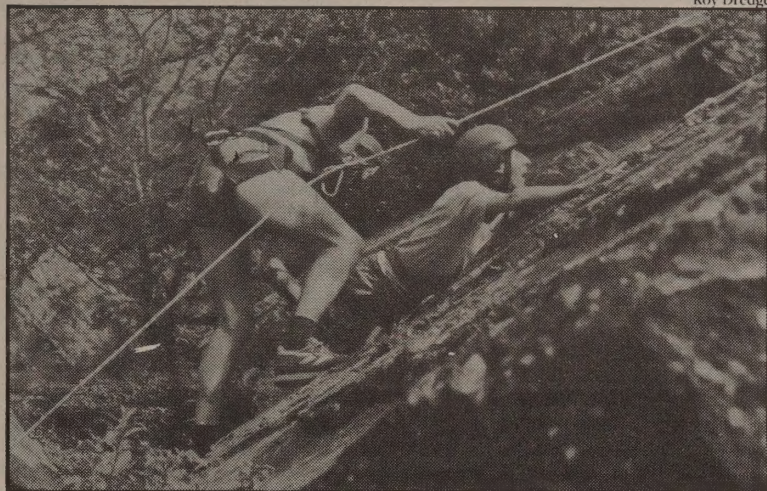
"The connection between smoking, low birthweight babies and handicap has been established," said John Cox, the director, "and it's time the government took action."

He urged people who felt strongly to write to their MPs.

The Society's call to the government coincides with a letter sent last month by the British Medical Association to Norman Fowler, Social Services Secretary.

Negotiations are now going on between the DHSS and the tobacco industry over a new voluntary code of practice due to start in January.

Once again, the BMA called for a ban on all tobacco advertising and promotion, and more emphatic health warnings on cigarette packets.



David Shipley goes on a Lake District climb, helped by Nick Cbetwood. For a special holiday, see page 7.

The Spastics Society has just completed its own survey of tobacco advertising in women's magazines. Thirteen magazines aimed at women aged 15-30 were monitored over 4 months (May to August).

The findings confirmed some of those in the more detailed study carried out by the BMA earlier this year.

Tobacco advertisers are certainly using young women's magazines as a means of reaching potential customers.

Four monthlies – *Cosmopolitan*, *Company*, *She* and *Woman's World* – carried 3-6 tobacco advertisements each

month. Two weeklies, *Woman* and *Women's Own*, averaged 2 advertisements per issue, or 8-10 a month.

The survey found that advertisements were abstract, concentrating on packaging rather than the cigarette and avoiding people. The report concludes that "cigarette advertising is now more subtle as if the issue is being played down. However this lower profile may mean that many women's magazines can accept the advertising and revenue without feeling that they are significantly influencing their readership."

This would be a false assumption, the report says, in view of recent research into brand preferences among children.

A letter in *The Lancet* (3 August) shows that Benson and Hedges, the most heavily promoted cigarette brand in Britain and the favourite among adults, is also by far the favourite among two groups of schoolchildren.

The BMA letter says that "no product which may appeal to the young (holidays, leisure or sportswear) should be allowed to carry a tobacco brand name."

One of the groups of children mentioned in *The Lancet* were asked their brand preference soon after seeing a snooker championship on BBC Television sponsored by Benson and Hedges. 76 per cent preferred Benson and Hedges.

For further information about the Society's survey, contact Debra Ziegler, tel: 01-636 5020.

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Fundraiser steals £7,500

A county organiser who raised money for The Spastics Society in Lincolnshire has been gaoled for 12 months.

David Brown, 36, was convicted last month of stealing nearly £7,500 over 3 years. He spent the money on cars, home alterations, a holiday in Corfu and his mistress.

The amounts stolen varied from £10 to £400 but they were difficult to detect because David Brown used income from one collection to top up what had been removed from another – "robbing Peter to pay Paul".

It was only in February this year that a routine enquiry about an unsigned cheque started an internal investigation which ended with the police being called in.

For The Spastics Society the case came as a shock, the first in 30 years of organising appeals.

"We have always known that our system was vulnerable as a fundraising operation," said Ann Hithersay, director of regions. "However, we've an excellent record of security where house to house collections are concerned and the Home Office which issues our permit is quite happy about all the methods we have used."

She admits that David Brown got through the routine screening of new staff members. He had previous convictions for burglary and theft, yet his 4 references were

entirely satisfactory. He was also the father of a cp child.

To stop such a thing happening again, the Society is taking preventative action.

A new management tier of regional appeals coordinators is being introduced. (5 out of 7 are already appointed.) They will be responsible for appeals officers and for, among other things, carrying out frequent spot checks.

This month the National Westminster Bank is starting a 3-month pilot project in Devon and Essex. Bank officials will count the money from each collector and pay it directly into the regional fund. No Society staff will be involved.

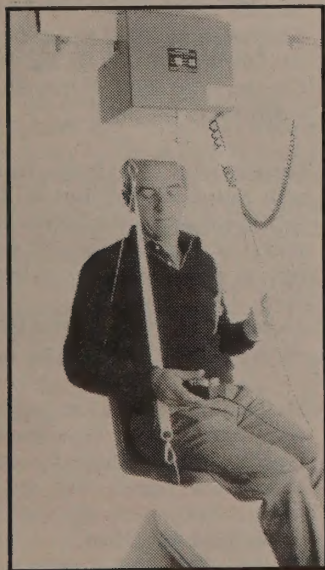
"If this could become a national scheme it would improve security, cut our costs and give our appeals officers more time for raising extra income," said Peter McCabe, the fundraising manager.

Fortunately the Society lost none of the £7,500. A Fidelity Bond covers it against loss of appeals income and the insurers have paid up.

"We are very grateful for the goodwill shown by more than 100,000 members of the public who make street collections on our behalf all over the country," said Ann Hithersay. "We hope they will continue to give us their support."

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DIRECTOR OF REGIONS

A visit to Northern Ireland

"If anything horrified me, it was the lack of provision for severely multiply handicapped people"

In June I was lucky enough to visit Northern Ireland for the first time to attend the 39th Annual General Meeting of NICOD - The Northern Ireland Council for Orthopaedic Development.

Integration is the keynote to all NICOD's services. In Northern Ireland the work means integration of Protestants and Catholics.

NICOD does not discriminate when employing staff or providing services.

In 1984 NICOD opened a hostel in Belfast for 10 severely physically handicapped school leavers, with funding from the Sembal Trust, the EEC Social Fund and Habinteg Ulster.

Until the hostel, named Ardkeen, opened, severely disabled school leavers who could not stay at home were faced with being placed in a psychiatric hospital or an old people's home.

Ardkeen's 10 places are now filled and more such hostels are desperately needed.

Balmoral Works Centre, run by NICOD, has also received substantial EEC Social Fund grants to enable young physically handicapped people to be trained for open employment. Modern electronic printing and computers are being used to give youngsters skills that are relevant to employment opportunities in Belfast and NICOD has placed 42 disabled youngsters in Sheltered Industrial Groups in 31 companies in Northern Ireland.

The organisation has long been involved in providing special education for physically handicapped children in Northern Ireland, at Mitchell House and Fleming Fulton school.

My visit to the latter school, which has over 100 pupils with ages ranging from 2 to 19 was a delightful experience. The whole school hummed with energy and enthusiasm.

Fleming Fulton is rightly proud of its non-denominational



Ann Hithersay

approach, and children from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds mingle happily together.

Perhaps because most press reports of Northern Ireland are consistently gloomy, I was totally unprepared for the warmth, generosity and air of quiet civilisation and culture in Belfast.

It is not a war torn city with poverty and destruction everywhere.

It is a gentle, beautiful city with new building and industrial growth clearly to be seen.

I visited the Shankill Road, the Falls Road, the Ardoyne and other poor areas where extremist views still prevail and the military presence is strong. It was but a tiny taste of the tension, strain and horror that has torn Northern Ireland apart for so long, but a more balanced presentation is needed.

If anything horrified me on such a brief visit it was the lack of provision for severely multiply handicapped children and adults. Such people still receive little education in Northern Ireland.

At present neither the Education (Handicapped Children) Act 1970 nor the 1981 Education Act apply in the province. This means that education for all mentally handicapped children is still the responsibility of the Health and Social Services Boards.

There are only two community occupational therapists for the County of Fermanagh and cuts mean that Health Boards cannot provide adequate therapists for special schools.

Most severely multiply handicapped children are still cared for in long-stay mental handicap hospitals. Because cuts mean short staffing, these children get little stimulation and virtually no "education".

Though children are no longer being admitted for long-term care, family support services are very poor.

Sadly, NICOD does not provide services for mentally handicapped children or adults, but following my visit the chairman has contacted MENCAP's Director in Northern Ireland and the Society's Executive Council here has promised help.

Letters to the Editor

Disability Now 12 Park Crescent London W1N 4EQ

The shop that never was

I was extremely surprised to hear from my daughter, whose son has cerebral palsy, of a disturbing situation that appears to have arisen within The Spastics Society.

As I understand it, The Spastics Society was planning to open a charity shop in Exeter for the purposes of raising funds to help support the wonderful work it does for the handicapped people it serves. However, at the last minute a local official of the Society announced that the local members would not allow the shop to open.

I am left wondering who he and his supporters claim to represent. For The Spastics Society to plan to open a shop must indicate that several thousand pounds a year would have been expected from it to support the care services.

Can someone explain through these columns why such a situation can occur?

Kathleen Mattin

107 Forest Road
Tunbridge Wells, Kent

The matter was put before the fund-raising committee of the Devon and Exeter Spastics Society and at their request, and after consideration of the circumstances, the management of the Society's shops decided not to proceed with this particular opening - Andrew Ross, Marketing Director.

Will Oliver



Just a quick note that maybe you will print in *Disability Now*.

On the 20 July my husband Brian (Will) Oliver died of stomach cancer.

We were the couple featured in the documentary *Like Other People* and have learned since of the encouragement it gave other disabled couples and maybe educated the able-bodied too.

I would just like to say that those who find love must FIGHT for their rights to be together, for marriage can bring great happiness as well as some sadness. The main thing is to FIGHT for what you want - that is our message.

Margaret Oliver

Friendship House
Turlin Moor
Hamworth, Dorset

Conductive Education - funding?

With reference to the article in *The Guardian* entitled "Conductive Tour de Force" I was very encouraged to read about the progress made in Budapest in the rehabilitation of children with motor disorders. I was also pleased to see that both the United Nations and Birmingham City Council were willing to pursue this line of treatment.

However, it would be a great pity if the project failed because no-one else was prepared to finance the experiment.

Perhaps The Spastics Society could give some consideration to the possibility of funding. I most sincerely hope so.

Dorothy Reynolds

160 Matlock Crescent
North Cheam
Surrey

The Society is currently undertaking a review of its educational resources, including its provision within the field of conductive education. It is hoped to undertake a feasibility study into the establishment of a centre for conductive education in this country - Freddie Green, Director of Education

What about us?

In reading the June edition of *Disability Now*, I was a little perturbed at some of the omissions and discrepancies of Peter Large's article.

It is interesting that in highlighting those organisations who were "notable amongst those that have done something" on the issue of discrimination, Peter Large fails to mention the deaf community as represented by the British Deaf Association (BDA).

I can only assume he didn't notice that 500 of the estimated 1,000 people present at Westminster at the lobby during the 2nd Reading Debate of Bob Wareing's Bill were deaf and BDA members like myself, or that we packed the Strangers Gallery throughout the day following the debate via a team of BDA sign language interpreters.

It also seems that he failed to notice reports in the national press of the publication of the BDA's report *Deaf Discrimination - A Challenge to the Hearing Community*, which was launched at a press conference at the House of Commons in October, 1984.

It is common for the deaf community to be forgotten as disabled people. Their views are rarely sought, as the saying goes, "out of sight out of mind". Deafness is an unseen disability and as such does not receive the publicity that other disabilities receive.

The BDA, which has HRH the Princess of Wales as its Patron, represents the majority of the deaf community and strives to improve and protect the interests of deaf people. The BDA organisation should be receiving the credit it so rightly deserves, especially over the Bob Wareing Campaign Bill last November in the House of Commons.

Terry Riley

Secretary
Manchester Deaf Sports and Social Club
Crawford House
Booth Street East
Manchester M13 9GH

Your views, please

I am a visually handicapped archaeologist working on a report on the reactions of members of the disabled public to the facilities - or in many instances the non-facilities - offered in museums and art galleries.

While special exhibitions for disabled people are to be commended, I believe the aim should be to modify existing facilities so that they may be used by disabled visitors like any other visitor without prior arrangements or special provision. Many of these changes are as simple as improved lighting, larger labels, taped guides, the provision of induction loop systems, adequate room for manoeuvring wheelchairs, and so on.

Unfortunately, too many of the recommendations put forward in reports represent the able-bodied person's perception of the needs and desires of the disabled, and there is little reference, if any, to opinions expressed by people who are blind, deaf or wheelchair users.

The aim of the report is to offer guidelines to museum professionals and, if possible, to put pressure on the Museums Association to pass recommendations for the legal minimum standard in such facilities to be maintained by all museums receiving government funding - similar to the American Architectural Barriers legislation.

I would be very interested to hear about the experiences any of your readers may have had in museums and art galleries around the country, and their views about possible changes and improvements to the existing facilities. If anyone does not wish their name to be used, then I will happily preserve their anonymity.

Margrethe de Neergaard

Finds Supervisor
Museum of London
150 London Wall
London EC2

WATCH IT!

If you keep the few crack pots out of this field so much the better.

Health Minister, Kenneth Clarke, reacting to a heckler during his speech at the World Congress on Mental Health, July - Simon Crompton

Kevin Astley (18) might be mentally handicapped, but he buckled down to work when he heard that The Spastics Society was after a new novelty collection box...

Oldham Evening Chronicle, 30 May - Simon Crompton

Help them to bear the burden of their handicap... Give them the courage to face those things they cannot change... and face life with a brave and truthful heart... in their affliction...

Prayer for the handicapped, Choral Evensong, Radio 3, 10 July - Alan Durant

Please send your contributions (not forgetting the source and your name) to Watch it! Disability Now, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

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MONTH IN PARLIAMENT



HOUSE OF COMMONS

The debate on 25 July on the social security upratings for November brought accusations that the Government was trying to cut the benefits of those most in need.

Earlier payment date

Michael Meacher (Labour spokesperson on social security) was concerned that pensioners will lose out due to a change in the payment date for pensions from November 1986 to July 1986. Moving the payment date for next year will result in a shortened period during which inflation, as measured by the retail price index (RPI), will be assessed.

Because the RPI has already registered a 4.5 per cent increase for the first half of the year, and because the Government is predicting that the overall rise for the year may only be 4.5 per cent, he feared that the Government would claim that no increase was due to pensioners as there had been no rise in inflation during that period.

Mr Meacher said that if pensions were to be uprated in the normal way a single pensioner might expect an increase of £1.75 and a couple £2.75. Thus he claimed that pensioners might be faced with a "one off" reduction in the value of their pensions if the Government's move went ahead.

If Mr Meacher's claim is correct there could be serious implications for many other benefits that are linked to pensions as well as benefits that are normally uprated in line with the retail price index.

Pensioners could lose out when upratings are paid 4 months earlier next year - claims Meacher

Tony Newton, minister of state for social security, replied that the Government will continue to base rises in pensions on rises in prices, and gave an assurance that pensioners will be protected against any rise in prices.

However, Michael Meacher felt that the Minister was missing the point that during the change-over period the value of pen-

sioners) means that many pensioners will find that they have little or no increase in their pensions despite the general uprating of invalidity pension by 12 per cent. We now know more.

A single person on maximum allowance is set to receive the basic increase of £4.60. However, if the additional component he or she receives amounts to

which the dependant is entitled to the extra addition to the pension is to be linked to the level of unemployment benefit. This will save the Government £20 million over a full year.

Tony Newton acknowledged that while the change creates a more generous rule for the husbands of wives getting long term benefits, it is less generous than

(Labour) criticised the Government for this move in the upratings debate, and argued that the cost of uprating invalidity pension was being offset against cuts in the entitlement to the extra additions.

Heating allowance

Bruce Millan (Labour) led the protests from a number of Labour MPs about the changes to the higher rate of heating allowance which were abolished on 5 August, and which will result in a £55 million "saving" for the Government.

They were supported in this by Archy Kirkwood (Liberal). While welcoming the extension of the £2.20 heating addition to be paid automatically to sick and disabled householders on the long term rate of SB (as reported in *Disability Now*, July 1985), he felt that the new system would cause confusion.

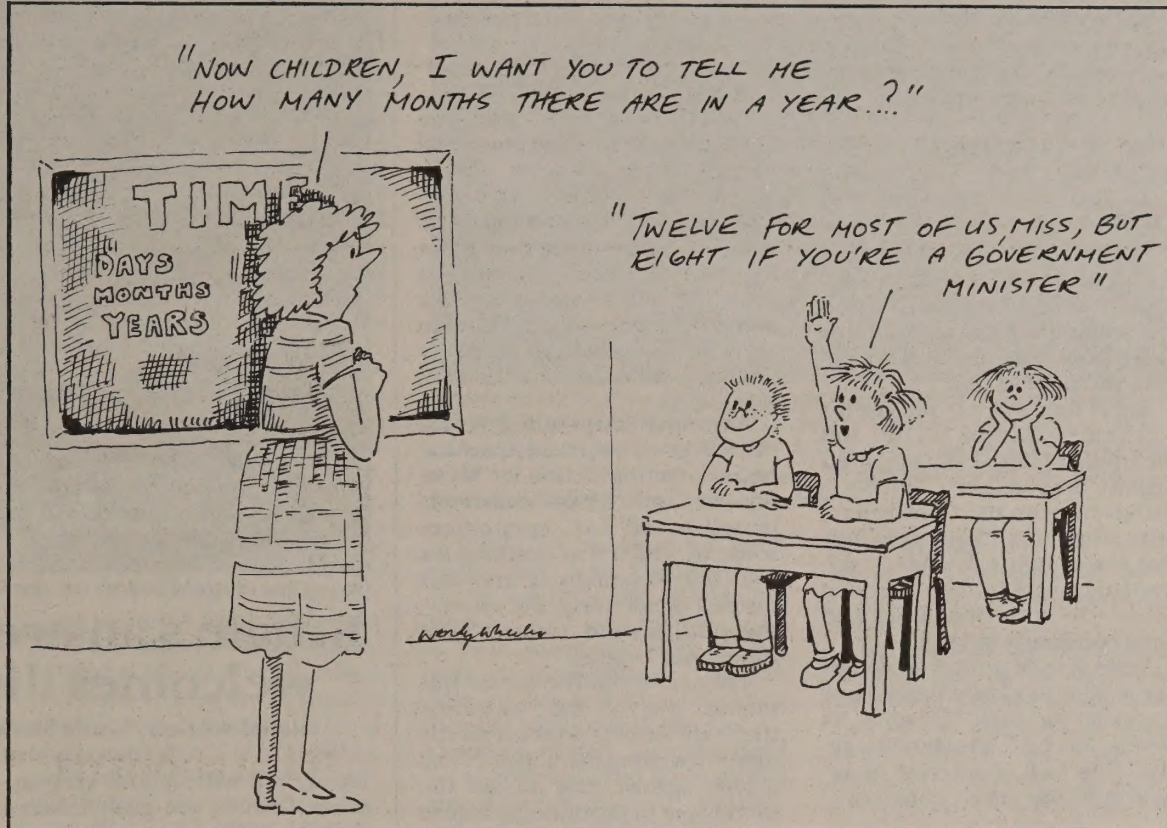
The old regulations had allowed some people to claim heating additions on two grounds - firstly, if they were sick or disabled people, secondly, if they lived in accommodation which was difficult to heat. Before, it had been possible to claim both benefits and qualify for a higher rate of benefit, but the change would mean that new claimants could no longer do so.

Bruce Millan questioned Tony Newton's assurance that existing claimants would be protected from the change by arguing that many of them would now only receive the lower rate.

The Minister denied that this would necessarily be so. Some categories of claimant, like those over 85 and some long term sick and disabled people, would be entitled to be paid at the higher rate, he said.

However, Frank Field (Labour) felt that he could only praise the Government on the cleverness with which it had presented "yet another important cut as an increase in benefits rights for some of our poorest constituents".

Brian Lamb



sions would not rise in line with prices.

Invalidity Benefit

MPs also debated important changes to the rules governing Invalidity Benefit. Michael Meacher complained that the new earnings level for wives or husbands of invalidity pensioners (which sets the level they can earn before the claimant loses the addition to the pension) was an exercise in "levelling down".

For although the new earnings limit is now the same for men and women, the cut off point at

present provision for the wives of men who receive similar benefits.

The new rule comes into effect on 16 September and will only affect new claimants. The new limit from 25 November will be £30.45 and the value of the adult dependant allowance will be £23.00 from that date.

As suggested in the last issue of *Disability Now*, the Government's proposals to offset invalidity allowances and the additional component (the two additions to the basic pension claimed by thousands of invalid-

more than this, the benefit will simply be frozen at its present level. This will represent a cut in the real value of the pension and will result in no cash increase.

Those on lower rates of benefit will enjoy a slight increase. This will benefit most invalidity pensioners as only a few qualify for the maximum allowance.

However, all those who have been entitled to both benefits in the past will find the increase in pension smaller than expected, and in many cases well below what might have been expected from a 12 per cent increase.

Mrs Margaret Beckett

REPORTS

MEIU Scientific Meeting

How gait laboratories could help cp children

The mechanical recording of movement has been developing over many years in both Europe and North America. It is in North America, however, that the most rapid growth of fully-equipped gait laboratories occurred first. Many such units are now fully operational and regularly used in the clinical assessment of children and adults with cerebral palsy, particularly as a method of deciding on orthopaedic intervention.

These laboratories have three main parts to them. Firstly, there is a photographic system which analyses visual information and transforms it into some easily read and measured image (like a stick-man).

Secondly, there is dynamic electromyography. This involves putting either a surface recorder over individual muscle groups or a fine wire into the muscle, and then recording

through several places to discover how the muscles are contracting during each step cycle.

Thirdly, there is the force plate, which is a device in the floor of the laboratory used for measuring the work done in walking.

At our meeting in July we were fortunate to have Dr Jacquelin Perry from the Rancho Los Amigos Centre in Downey, California, Dr David Sutherland from San Diego, California, and Dr James Gage from Newington, Connecticut. Between them they made a strong case for the adoption of these methods for cerebral palsy.

Computer analysis of the data now means that results are available within two to three hours of the recording. There is now enough data on the normal development of walking to serve as a base line.

It is also clear that good recordings can be obtained from children who have been allowed to relax, and there was some reassurance at the meeting that a child walking in a gait laboratory did not just produce a "funny walk" for the occasion.

Scientifically the most exciting part of the analysis is dynamic EMG, developed by Dr Perry. There are very many reasons why someone may rise on their toes, become bent at the knees

or turn in a leg during walking. We were shown many examples of different muscular mechanisms for what might appear to be the same point in walking, and how by recording from individual muscles surgical treatment could be more effectively planned.

In a number of American centres they have taken the logical but perhaps rather ambitious step of carrying out surgery at ankle, knee and hip level all at the same time following a gait analysis. We discussed at some length whether surgery at one level could have an impact at another level and make one of the multiple procedures redundant.

Plainly there is a disagreement about this, even amongst those surgeons who routinely use a gait laboratory. However, it was our view that centres in Britain need to use such facilities on a clinical research basis to be able to join in a scientific discussion with North American colleague.

Most British orthopaedic teams dealing with cerebral palsied children have prided themselves on their clinical judgment and we have really no way of comparing the results of intervention on present evidence. The group from the United Kingdom felt that gait analysis should be used more widely as a re-

search tool for other sorts of physical intervention, particularly drugs, physiotherapy and the use of orthoses. Information on a very nice project in Scotland looking at the mechanisms underlying the use of ankle-foot orthoses was presented. Also discussed was the use of gait analysis to look at the natural history of different forms of cp, which could provide information on classification and outcome.

Gait laboratories can cost anything from £30,000 to £200,000, though £30,000 to £50,000 looks to be the sort of sum involved for the basic equipment. The very surprising thing that emerged was that there are already 42 gait laboratories in the U.K.

They have often been set up to look at problems other than cerebral palsy but we are now in the process of circulating details of these laboratories to those who attended the meeting and paediatric neurologists and orthopaedic surgeons interested in cerebral palsy in this country.

In general we felt that this was an important and exciting advance in the management of those people with cp who can walk.

Brian Neville

Dr Brian Neville is Hon. Executive Secretary of the Medical, Education and Information Unit of The Spastics Society.

SE Alpha Advisory Committee Conference

Strong views on employment

The main aim of the day was to find out how much support there would be for a regional Alpha Advisory Committee of cp people who would report to The Spastics Society's Alpha Advisory Committee.

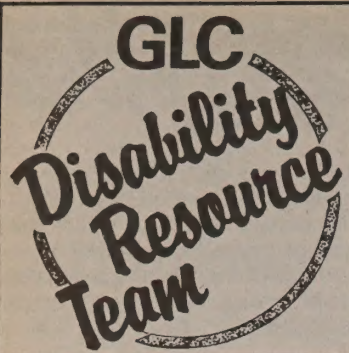
Twenty-six people came to the Westminster Cathedral Conference Centre in London on 6 July.

The meeting was chaired by Sharon Hughes, chair of the national committee, who spoke about the history and aims of the committee and the structure of the Society.

Other speakers were Ken Smith on the role of Alpha research and development officers, Alan Kerwin on residential home and sheltered employment, and myself on the functions of a regional committee.

In the discussion groups which followed, the subject that produced most comment was employment. People felt strongly that those employed in sheltered workshops should be able to earn a wage and pay

Continued on page 4



A year ago this month the GLC bolstered its avowed intent to further the rights and opportunities of disabled people by setting up a Disability Resource Team.

The group, believed to be unique in local government, consists of 15 workers, 9 of whom have disabilities themselves. Its role is to co-ordinate the GLC's various departments and their projects for disabled people, and to act as a watchdog on its policy of equal opportunities.

It also has its own budget for particularly worthwhile projects throughout London, although the business of allocating funds to improve the lives of disabled Londoners is left on the whole to the GLC's individual departments. Since 1981 the GLC has spent a total of around £5 million on services for disabled people, with a further £5 million towards London's Dial-a-Ride service and the taxicard scheme.

Karen Medor, head of Advocacy and Liaison and deputy to the head of the DRT, believes that the team can achieve a lot on a smaller scale, without the need for large cash injections. "Anything the Council does is done

Municipal pioneers

The GLC's Disability Resource Team has had its share of ups and downs within its short history. Simon Crompton charts its course and considers the future.

to the DRT has so far been very good, says Karen Medor. "We've had 700 individual enquiries, and the feedback has been that we're greasing the wheels to help them work their way through the GLC. Before, they had no idea where to go."

But the team has not been without its problems, and not everyone is convinced that its heart is in the right place.

Discord

Its advisory body, the London Consortium on Disability has been the source of some discord. Set up by the GLC as a forum for the opinions of London's disabled people, it consists of representatives from 75 organisations in London. Only disabled people have the right to vote.

But in June three of the groups - Graae, Lambeth Accord and the Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIUS) - withdrew from the Consortium, protesting that their demands that voting rights should be confined to organisations controlled by people with disabilities had been constantly ignored.

Anne Rae of UPIUS spelt out her stance in *Community Care* magazine in July: "Despite its claims, the GLC has shown a remarkable lack of interest or response to the grass roots move-

Medor. "The disagreement comes because at the moment there aren't many such organisations. The GLC has a duty to listen to all organisations for disabled people."

The September meeting of the Consortium will again discuss these issues when its constitution is reviewed.

Cupboard is bare

Another problem is that the DRT's project funding cupboard is unexpectedly bare. Its Policy Studies and Project Development section allocated all of its £30,000 base budget long ago in 7 grants. (These included a MENCAP self-advocacy project and a travelling puppet show to increase awareness of disability among children in London Schools.)

Any further spending is, for the moment, out of the question because an injunction by Westminster Council has frozen funds passed by all GLC committees some of which was destined for the DRT. Westminster says that instead of spending the money, the GLC should reduce rates throughout London.

The case should be settled this month, but in the meantime there are several projects on the funding waiting list, and it will be a race against time to get the money out of the building before midnight on 31 March when the GLC disappears and the Disability Resource Team with it.

The GLC's impending doom means that much of the remaining time of the DRT will be taken up with making some provision for the future.

Not all London boroughs have equal opportunities schemes, never mind bodies to look after the interests of disabled people, so the team is drawing up a code of good practice which it would like all boroughs to adopt. It will also be bringing local authorities together for a conference in the early spring to discuss what can be done to counter discrimination.

"You can safely say that when the GLC goes, a lot of work for disabled people will go," says Karen Medor. "There will be a gradual chipping away of disabled people's entitlements."

The irony is, she says, that people won't really notice that the Disability Resource Team has gone - only if it had stayed would they have noticed the difference it made. "Awareness-raising exercises take decades," she says.

Lasting achievement

But if she had to pick out three things the team had done which were of lasting value...

"I'd say one must be postponing the construction of a new building on the South Bank which wasn't accessible - the Museum of the Moving Image next to the National Film Theatre. We made sure it was accessible before they started it."

"Secondly, the conference we're organising on 18 October for solicitors and legal advisors from all over London who at the moment are doing work on disability law in complete isolation."

"Finally, the example of the team itself is probably the greatest achievement in such a short time - as a demonstration to councils of exactly what can be done."



Down the chute! Visitors on the longest log flume in the world.

Britain's answer to Disneyland welcomes disabled people

Social worker, Linda Starkey, and Sue Leigh of Derby took a day out at Alton Towers

We arrived half-an-hour early at Alton Towers, the giant leisure park near Uttoxeter in Staffordshire. This caused some consternation among the gate staff as they wondered how to transport Sue, who is wheelchair-bound, from A to B.

Luckily a car took us to the Swiss Cottage Restaurant for the reception and lunch. If I had had to push the chair there, I might have abandoned the idea as the approach roads were quite steep.

Offered the choice of a guided tour of the park or going it alone, Sue and I decided on the latter so that we could really test out the brochure claims about "access for the disabled".

Sadly the rain was exceptionally heavy so we had to rely on the staff to provide a car and driver to take us to the major rides.

The Log Flume came first and after that no-one cared about the rain as we were all soaked to the skin!

Sue braved other rides too, including on a rollercoaster, aptly called the Corkscrew.

Although help was organised to transfer Sue from wheelchair to ride, not once was she made to feel embarrassed or anything of a problem by the rides attendants. They made it plain that

they were happy to help, given time to organise other helpers.

Sue felt that the staff had "fun, fun fun" as their main objective. If Alton Towers can be so much fun in such dreadful weather then it must be very successful.

We had several problems with toilets. At the Swiss Cottage Restaurant, they were either up on the second floor or around the back of the building which had two steps at the entrance. Elsewhere, the toilets were not wide enough to manoeuvre a large wheelchair. However 7 of the 10 public toilet blocks have disabled toilets.

This trip to a pleasure park turned out to be the first Sue had had since she grew too big for her father to lift her onto the rides. Watching her take part instead of just observing was a reward in itself.

Alton Towers say they have a high attendance of disabled children and adults. Having been there, we are confident that every effort is made to make their day enjoyable.

Alton Towers, the official guide and souvenir, gives full information including facilities for disabled people. £2.99 from bookshops or £3.35 (incl. postage) from Sunflower Books, 12 Kendrick Mews, London SW7 3HG.

AAC Conference

Continued from page 3

taxes like anyone else, thus giving them the dignity of earning their own living and reducing their reliance on the State. They also wanted to see people trained in particular skills (according to their abilities) so as to improve their employment prospects.

It was thought that the national AAC should examine the whole question of employment.

Education was another important topic, both educating disabled people and educating the public about disability. While it was felt that, where possible, children should be educated in ordinary schools to encourage

integration and set the style for future generations, some people thought that specialist schools were still needed for severely disabled children so that their education would not suffer.

On transport, it was agreed that the Mobility Allowance was inadequate and more financial support should be given to Dial-a-Ride and similar schemes.

The day revealed some strong views and plenty for the national committee and a regional committee to think about.

A meeting will be held soon to formally constitute a Regional Alpha Advisory Committee and to discuss a topic at length, possibly employment.

Richard Gamble
Alpha Advisory Committee



Courtesy of the GLC

The London Consortium on Disability at one of its quarterly full meetings.

through committee reports, which we go through and try and make sure the little things are done. For example, if we get a report on repairing a nature trail in London, we say 'Do the leaflets say if it's accessible? Can you make it more accessible? Can you send the warden to be trained with the Disabled Living Foundation? And so on. If you magnify that kind of thing it can end up being very significant.'

Discrimination

Significant results can also be achieved, she says, when it comes to challenging discriminatory attitudes. "People say 'If we put in these ramps and this braille, it's a lot of effort. Will disabled people want to go there?' We have to say 'If anyone would, yes!' That happened recently at the National Theatre."

The GLC is setting its own example against discrimination in employment. With the help of the DRT and the GLC Equal Opportunities Section it has added 60 registered disabled people to its payroll in the last year, bringing its total to 225.

The general public's response

ment of disabled people," she said.

Lin Berwick, the Carematch representative on the Consortium, disagrees: "The GLC is having its hands tied behind its back by these groups at every turn," she says. "We should be working in partnership with able-bodied people, not segregating ourselves."

Karen Medor does not feel the dispute has been that disruptive.

"The Consortium really operates through its advisory groups on housing, arts and recreation, transport, education, access and employment," she says. "These have continued, and influenced our decisions." (The Education Advisory Group put forward a paper to the Fish Committee, and the Transport Advisory Group has seen flaws for disabled people in the new FX4 taxi planned for London and put forward alterations.)

"A large number of people support the principle that disability organisations should be controlled by people with disabilities, including Councillor Lesley Hammond, the chair of the Consortium," says Karen

INTERNATIONAL

"In America today, parents of young handicapped children are the new wave. They take rights for granted. They have more confidence. The struggle, by and large, has been achieved."

Betsy Anderson should know. As a founder of the Federation for Children with Special Needs in Boston, Massachusetts, she has been involved in the fight for integration from the beginning.

"Ten years ago when the American law covering the education of handicapped children was passed, the 'first wave' of parents had to worry about simply getting their child into school - any school, if your child was severely handicapped."

Massachusetts is an interesting State to visit because its early pioneering work in this area of education strongly influenced the eventual drafting of the Federal (national) law of 1975, The Education of All Handicapped Children Act (see box).

As in our 1981 Education Act, which has been operating for 2 years, the major theme is parental involvement in the identification, assessment, placement and education of handicapped children.

The effect of the Act in America has been dramatic. In the parts of Massachusetts I visited, I found it was taken for granted that parents would contribute



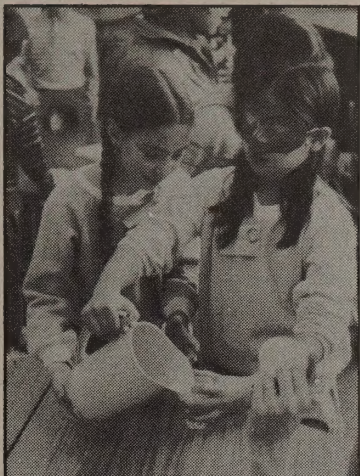
Susan Sternfield is parent coordinator of the Brookline Handicap Awareness Programme now operating in many schools.

and that their involvement was vitally important. More to the point, the administrators and professionals were fully geared to taking their comments and contributions seriously.

As a result, parents' expectations were higher and the expectations of a child by a local education authority or a school were formed in the belief that: "This child has the same right to opportunities of self-fulfilment as others."

If Massachusetts can do it, why can't we?

Mark Vaughan of The Spastics Society's Centre for the Study of Integration in Education visited the USA in April and came back full of ideas



Pouring water into a cup is not so easy when you wear a mask. 9-year-olds from Devotion School learn what it feels like to be blind as part of the Handicap Awareness Programme. In group discussions, they ask perceptive questions.

The Federation for Children with Special Needs was formed in 1975. It offers ongoing training to parents (and professionals) to become more knowledgeable about special education laws. It answers all types of query, has its own training handbooks, leaflets and other publications and acts as a national clearing house for similar parent-support centres across America.

When I asked people at the Federation (some of whom are parents of handicapped children) to look back over the last ten years, the picture which emerged was curiously familiar.

"The essential problem for families ten years ago was that parents didn't know how to use the new law, yet they were being asked to be involved to a considerable degree," said Betsy Anderson.

"We were a loose coalition of parents and professionals who had really valued exchanging ideas. But it was obvious that we had to start holding training days - and without any knowledge of what you do to get a series of training days off the ground, we just went ahead and did it! It is now a very important part of our work, whether we are giving parents an individual understanding of the law and the new procedures, or training lay advocates to help parents at appeals."



It's fun to write your first Braille message and get it right. The boy on the left listens intently while "I support the Boston Red Sox" is read out by a blind parent volunteer. It is part of a morning session given over to the Handicap Awareness Programme run by parents at Devotion School, Brookline, Boston.

While the struggle for basic rights has been largely won, there are still, she thinks, big gaps.

"We need to start giving young handicapped children role-models and career training from the age of two, just like we do with ordinary kids. We need to expose children with special needs to just as many possibilities as able-bodied children."

In the near future she believes handicapped children will be given the opportunity to write their own education plan. "The logical next step from advocacy - which we have largely achieved - is, of course self-advocacy. It has to come."

Such has been the impact of the parent centres all over America that President Reagan has authorised \$2.2 million to be given to 5 regional centres to encourage parental involvement in the education of their children. (The cash is linked to a new law passed last year which promotes information and training for parents.)

The Reagan administration has now gone further. It is asking for a 2-part evaluation of the Federal money spent on parent centres nationwide. It wants to know how effective their work is, whether parents have learned about the law, the regulations and various procedures, and

whether they have been able to effect local changes in the education of their handicapped children.

Behind Washington's commitment to helping the centres and informing parents is the belief that in the end parents are far more cost-effective when they work for what they want, in this case better education for their handicapped children!

After visiting a variety of schools and colleges in Massachusetts, I would say that there are two main points to be made about integration, or mainstreaming.

Integration as a philosophy and as a basic human right is firmly established in the education system over there. As a result, many more children with special needs are educated alongside their non-handicapped peers in ordinary settings than is the case in England or Wales.

This is not to say that everything is perfect and that all necessary reform has taken place. But as Roger Brown, the Massachusetts Associate Commissioner for Special Education put it, after visiting schools in England earlier this year, "We are at least 15 years ahead of you. Most children who are in special schools in England would be in our regular (ordinary) schools,

either in special classes for up to 60 per cent of their time and regular classes for the rest, or in full-time special class in ordinary schools."

Can we learn from American practice? The answer is a firm "yes" because the struggle - and social change - is basically the same.

Although we should not import specific models because social change is a process and therefore should take place according to local circumstances in particular areas in this country, I do believe we can import some examples of good practice and adapt them to our schools, education authorities, parents and parent-support groups.

Here are 7 points which I would like to see developed further.

1 The philosophical ideals underlying the moves to reduce the segregation of people with handicaps should be promoted more strongly, starting with the Education Secretary, Sir Keith Joseph.

2 Much better information and support from LEAs and schools is needed for parents and parent-support groups about the law and assessment procedures as well as the different options on placements and teaching techniques. Also there needs to be urgent development of independent parent-support groups in local areas.

3 There should be team meetings which include parents and older children to discuss the most appropriate placement and provision for a young person before major decisions are put into draft statements.



A child with special needs takes time out from class to play draughts with his teacher's aid. She is there all day for when he needs special attention or support. Meanwhile, the vice-principal of the Pierce Brookline School helps an able bodied pupil.

4 In disputes, LEAs should develop ways to mediate between parents and schools or authorities instead of parents going for formal appeals.

5 Ordinary schools should develop handicap-awareness programmes as part of the normal curriculum. (In several LEAs in Massachusetts these programmes have been written by parent groups, funded by the authority, and then taught in ordinary schools by volunteer parents.)

6 The structure and curriculum of ordinary schools should be flexible enough to include groups of children hitherto excluded as well as offering activities such as sign language for hearing children.

7 Lastly, we could all try to import, develop and promote some of the real status which parents of handicapped young people, and the young people themselves, naturally seem to have in places like Massachusetts.

Mainstreaming in Massachusetts, published by CSIE and the Campaign for People with Mental Handicaps (CMH), will be available from CSIE this Autumn.

The Education of All Handicapped Children Act backs parents and children

The Act ensures among other things that:

- In all 50 States handicapped children aged 3-21 have available to them a free, appropriate, public education designed to meet their unique needs.
- The rights of handicapped children and their parents or guardians are protected.
- Local education authorities in each State are responsible for identifying, locating and educating children with special needs in "the least restrictive environment", ie. as far as possible with non-handicapped children. The education must include non-academic and extra-curricular activities. Placement must be as close as possible to home.
- Each child must have an individualised educational plan (IEP) which includes his or her needs and specific ways in which goals are to be reached over a one year period.
- The IEP is decided only after a team meeting which must include the parents and child, where appropriate. The IEP is not valid without the parent's consent and can be revoked at any time in the process. It must be written within 30 days of the decision that a child needs special education and related services.
- The IEP must be reviewed at least once a year. Parents have the right to a full re-evaluation every 3 years. They may refer their own child for an evaluation. They may have their child tested using non-discriminatory test material in the usual way the child communicates.
- Parents have the right to an appeal or hearing if any of these rights

are denied or if they are in dispute with the school or LEA. They can also appeal to a higher body if the hearing finds against them.

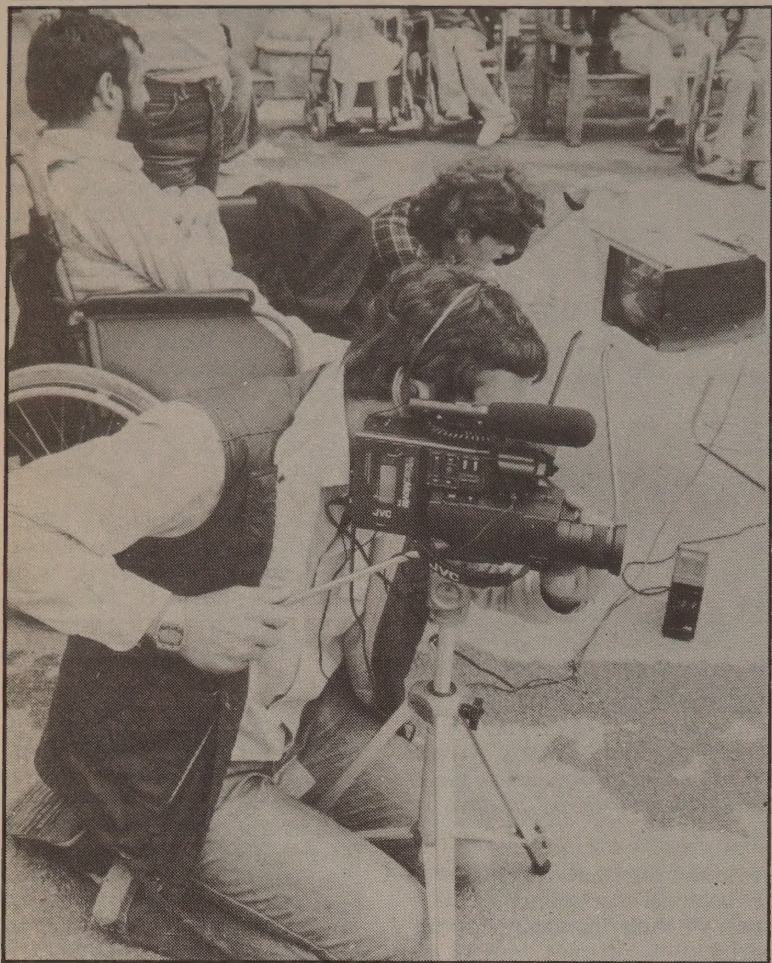
- Parents can request that a hearing is held in public. They must receive a copy of all documents 5 days before the hearing. They can present evidence, cross-examine and compel witnesses to attend.
- Parents have the right to see and obtain copies of all records and reports and to have confidentiality maintained.
- Parents must be informed of all meetings early enough to ensure they may attend.
- Where parents withhold or revoke consent for an evaluation their child is still guaranteed all normal education services.
- Where parents disagree with an evaluation they have the right to a further independent evaluation at public expense.

Massachusetts State Law (Chapter 766) goes further:

- All categories of handicap listed in the Federal law are abolished. Instead, children with special needs are classified according to the amount of time they spend out of the ordinary classroom receiving special provision.
- Evaluation of a child by professionals can only go ahead with the parent's permission.
- The parent and a child aged 14 or older have the right to meet the team meeting chairperson before the meeting.
- A student aged 18 or older may act on his or her own behalf.



"Coming In": A 14-day video experience



Peter Preisegger from Austria shoots the video while organisers Chris Davies and Jenny Holland watch on a monitor.

"There wasn't enough time - with so much to do there was very little time to relax. Sometimes we worked until 12 pm - so if we wanted to relax we stayed up until 2 or 3 in the morning.

At the beginning of the workcamp I had real difficulties because I wasn't used to disabled people - in Austria you never see them on the streets because they're all in institutions. I had to get up an hour early every morning to help Alexandra get ready - I became used to it and

liked to do it.

My attitude has changed but so has hers. She and her mother had always talked in a sign language with their hands which I couldn't understand, but when I got her to talk I realised I could understand her." **Ulrite Rozanek**

"I enjoyed the team spirit of the production. It was good to see people with little or no background in disability learning the caring role." **Martin Hayball**

Twenty-eight young people from England, Austria and Turkey came together at Thomas Delarue School in Kent for two weeks last month to learn how to make a video.

The work camp was also about getting to know other people. Organised by The Spastics Society and PHAB as part of International Youth Year, it was called *Coming In*, because it hoped to complement the PHAB leaflet, *Can I Come In?* which encourages youth clubs to integrate disabled people.

Using £5,000 worth of equipment donated by JVC (UK) Ltd, the participants made trial videos in the first week. In the second week they all came together along the lines of a professional video company to produce a

"The workcamp surpassed my expectations - it wasn't just taking pictures to kill time, as I thought it might be." **Özgen Ozeren**

film, parts of which at least will be used by PHAB in training.

Written by the participants with disabilities and called *All Club Together*, the film consists of two short dramas about what youth clubs should do for disabled people and what they shouldn't do, and a discussion with disabled people about their experiences.

The workcamp included

trips to Canterbury, Brighton and the disabled artists day at Covent Garden, London. Some of the quotations below indicate that, certainly socially, the workcamp was an embodiment of the points the participants drove home in their video.

As Bill Hargreaves said at the unveiling of the new film on the final day of the course, "You can make integration happen if you let it."

Jenny Holland



Alexandra Hobn (left), a central figure in the PHAB video, and Nigel Allwright, enjoying a post-prandial chat at Delarue.



The visit to Covent Garden was cold and wet, but refreshments were some consolation. Left to right: Burak Ulker, Bernie Brotherton, Mark Williams and Nigel Allwright.

"I was sure that video would not be as interesting as coming to England and making new friends. For the first days I had difficulties speaking with and helping the disabled. But then after a time I saw that these disabled people must be treated as any other person. From this point, I began to enjoy the workcamp." **Sieglinde Lagler**

"The course helped people realise what disability is and what is involved - I don't know if it will have lasting results though. I made a lot of new friends, and learnt more about other people - and The Spastics Society!" **Mark Williams**

"I expected more than 3 nationalities to be here, and a

4 ways to care

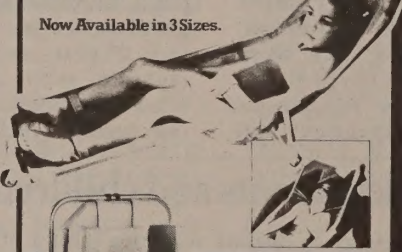
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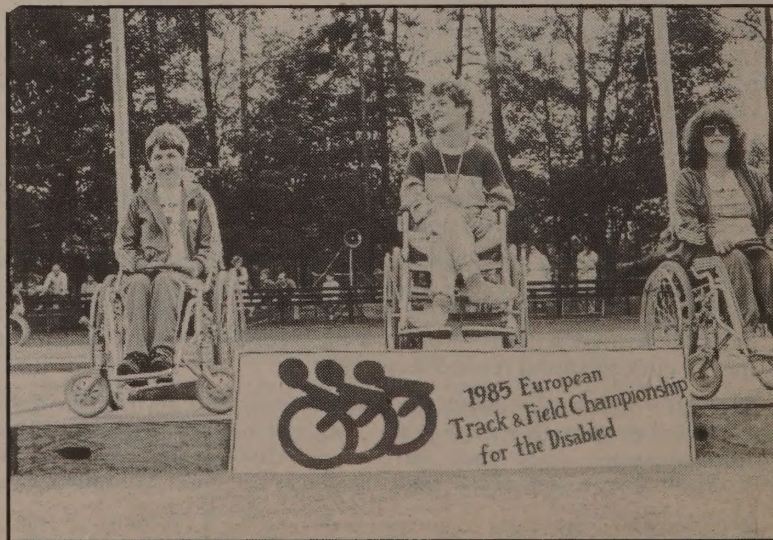
25 more golds for England

A team of 20 athletes from England competed in the European Track and Field Championships for people with cerebral palsy in Antwerp from 14-18 August. The 4 major disability groups all held their championships in Belgium this year - Les Autres also came to Antwerp, whilst the paraplegics and amputees held their event in Brussels.

For once the weather resembled something like summer and for 3 days the sun blazed down. After a long and tedious journey

the English team arrived to find very spartan accommodation but this was made up for by the quality of food.

Thursday morning saw an opening ceremony with marching bands and a team parade, and then it was straight into competition and a very hectic programme. The 3 days of competition all started at 10am and did not finish until 5.30pm so it was obvious that the better prepared the team, the more successful they would be.



or young people



...as (left), a PHAB organiser from Salisbury, helps Alexandra Hohn from ...th her make-up before filming at Dene College.

... of able-bodied and ... handicapped people ... ter of the participants ... bilities). The equip- ... quite complicated to ... r Ulker

... a lot about video. The ... ed people tended to ... r when making the ... ut that's inevitable ... ratio is wrong. But on ... video was a very use- ... m for integration be- ... visual, and everyone ... it together." Lucy

... of IYY it's worked ... ly - the integration ... perfect. Socially, it was ... arly successful. And ... nt of footage we had ... amazed people at the ... the fortnight." Chris ... ideo co-ordinator



Batur Ulker from Turkey shows Mark Williams what does what on the video camera.

"If Chris Bonnington can do it, I can!"

What they got up to on a recreational week in the Lake District

Thirty-five people, 18 of them disabled, came from all over the North-East (and even from London) for a week of activities in the Lake District in July.

Their ages ranged from 17 to 55 and they came from work centres, residential centres, open employment and home.

Bendrigg Lodge, Kendal, was their base, which is geared to enough activities for anyone. There was climbing and abseiling, caving, horse-riding, sailing, canoeing, photography, cooking and household jobs (if you wanted), and outings.

The week was part of an annual programme sponsored by The Spastics Society's North-East Region.

Sue Smith was the official organiser, helped by tutors at the Lodge and a band of enthusiastic volunteers. But she was keen not to be a sergeant major.

"The emphasis was on choosing. People did what they wanted, often for the first time in their lives," she said.

She admits the organisation was "a headache". "But it was also tremendously satisfying. People made new friends and gained in confidence. Everyone achieved something new. You should have seen the satisfaction on their faces!"

Bruno Sonnino tried a new activity every day, but it was the climbing he enjoyed most, though he was a bit frightened at first. "After all," he said, "if Chris Bonnington can do it, I can!"

David Shipley's highlight was the horseriding. On his second outing he was able to ride the pony himself without any helpers for the first time.

David cannot speak, but spelt out on his electronic keyboard "The horseriding was great" before he left.

Roy Dredge, a photographer for over 20 years, found the activities holiday gave him a new and stimulating subject matter.

"The rock climbing was a new view point for my camera as I was able to get above my subject", he said. "To gain the best position I had to climb myself, which was very exciting. It is a personal thing between you and the rock face, finding hand and foot holds, the friendship of other climbers encouraging you to the top."

"Some of the best photos are those of people reaching the top ledge, their faces beaming at you."



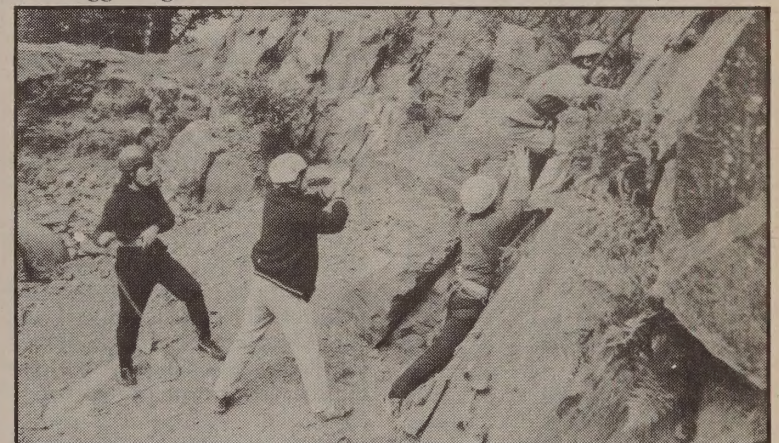
Time off for Roy Dredge, who scaled the cliff and balanced on ledges to get his photos. The hammock is part of the assault course at Bendrigg.

If you want to find out about next year's activity weeks, contact Sue Smith at Halgarth House, Halgarth Street, Durham City DH1 3AY. Tel: 0385 62127.

Roy Dredge

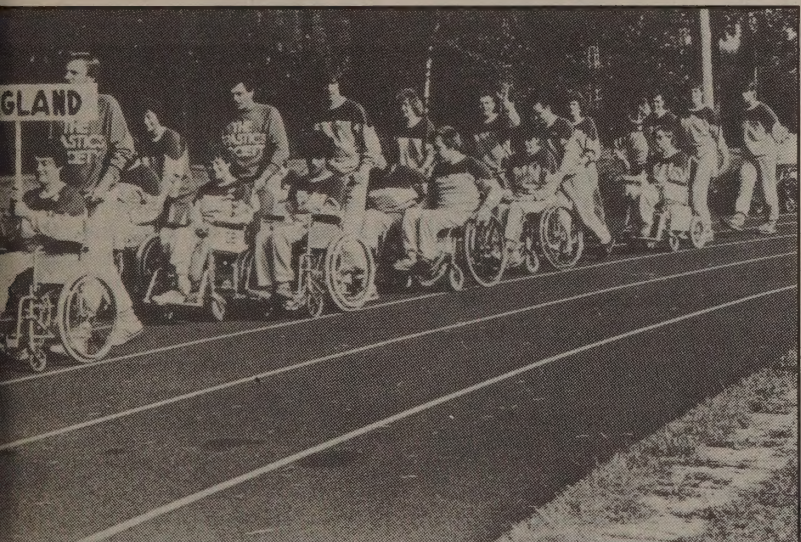


On top form - Sue Smith gets there, with Trevor Clarke, principal of Bendrigg Lodge.



Bruno Sonnino gets off to a good start, helped by Mike Hazlehurst while volunteers hold the rope.

Sport... Sport... Sport.



Above: The England team in the parade which formed a part of the opening ceremony of the Championships. Left: The medal ceremony for the class 2 club event. Ann Swann from Scotland (left) won the silver, Val Smith of England (centre) won the gold and Claire Douglas, another Scot, took the bronze.

Having had 2 days preparation at Stoke Mandeville, it didn't take too long for the English squad to prove, yet again, how fit and well-trained they were. Within an hour of competition Valerie Smith had recorded the first gold medal, winning the class 2 club event. This was to set the pace for the rest of the competition.

One of the best performances came from Jane Peters who broke 4 world records in 4 events - the club, shot, discus and javelin. Altogether the team

broke 9 world records with 1 more awaiting ratification.

Sylvia Payne, in her first International, broke the class 4 club world record by over a metre. Norman Burns caused controversy in the class 4 club by showing off a new technique - spinning his wheelchair to gain momentum. He also achieved a world record.

Ann Trotman, the team captain, broke the club and discus world records whilst gaining 3 gold medals and 1 silver.

Brenda Woodcock again showed her domination of world athletics, winning 4 golds in the class 8 Track event, breaking the 100m world record in the process.

Some of the keenest competition was on the track. In the 800m Andrew Ferguson broke from the pack at the 400m stage but was just pipped at the post by the favourite for the event.

Stephen Syndercombe ran a tremendous final leg in the 4 x 100m relay to make up the 5m lead that the Belgian team had opened up and win the race.

The 3 x 60m class 2 and 3 relay team were outstanding, pushing the Scottish team into second place. The 4 x 100 class 4 relay team attempted a new world record and were a mere 2 seconds outside the time.

The overall medal count for the English party was 25 gold, 9 silver and 12 bronze.

I think team captain Ann Trotman summed up the notable performance by all the team when she said "It is the best team that has ever travelled from these shores with regard to spirit, dedication and their prepared determination to give 100 per cent."

And all those who were involved will know that, coming from such an experienced athlete and considering the success of last year's New York team, that is some compliment.

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Candidates for the Executive Council 1985

The Annual General Meeting of The Spastics Society will be held at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, London, on 2 November

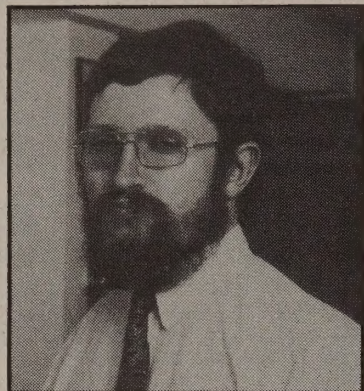


Derek Ashcroft, 61, is a schoolmaster and has a son with cerebral palsy. He has been a member of the Executive Council for

11 years, the last 4 of them as Vice-Chairman. He is a member of the Management Board and the Family Services Fund and was also Chairman of the former Resources Committee. At local group level he has been a member of the Brighton, Hove and District Spastics Society's Executive Committee for 21 years and nominee member for the South East Regional Committee for 15 years, 12 of them as Vice-Chairman and one as Chairman. He is also on the Regional Committee.

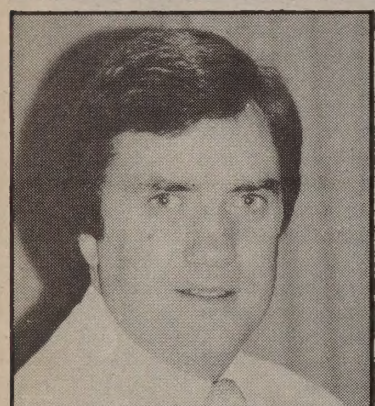
Special interests: statutory school age and post-16 education, integration, and social services.*

Andrew Berry, 34, is a director of a micro-computer company. He has cerebral palsy and attended Thomas Delarue School from 1961 to 1969. He was Vice-Chairman of the Old Delaruvian Association for 2 years. He has been a member of several affiliated local groups, including Bristol and North London, and is currently Treasurer of the Milton Keynes group. Actively involved in the Milton Keynes Council of Disabled People, he is concerned with transport needs. For 3 years from 1973 he undertook research into computer-based communication systems for people



with disabilities.

Special interests: long-term training and employment prospects.



John Byworth, 35, is a company director. He has been a member of the Executive Council for 3

years, is a member of the Management Board, and from 1982 to 1984 was a member of the Regions Committee. At local group level he is Chairman of the North London Spastics Society and was Chairman of the London Regional Committee for 6 years from 1978 to 1984. He sits on the Management Committee of Wakes Hall Hostel and the Hornsey Centre for Handicapped Children and is also the motor-ing correspondent for *Disability Now*.

Special interests: designing mechanical aids for adult disabled people to help them live an independent life.*

Elizabeth Farrelly, 59, has headed a department of life skills, health and related subjects for most of her life. She is Chairman of Sunderland and District Spastics Society, Chairman of both its Management and Executive Committees, and a member of the North East Regional Committee. She manages the group's work centre, and has started several training projects, integrating the workers into local further education colleges. She is a member of the Sunderland Executive of the Council for Voluntary Service and a member of the executive committee of its MSC Community Programmes. She was the first woman governor of the London Hospital



and is on the advisory committee of London University examining board.

Special interests: the education and training of people with special needs and the question of integration in society.



Betty Fisher, 39, is a housewife, liaison officer for PHAB and the mother of a multi-handicapped son. She has been Vice-Chairman

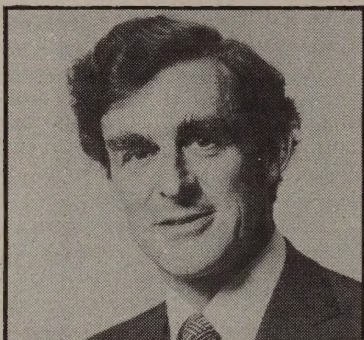
of the Doncaster and District Spastics Society and is a member of the North East Regional Committee. She is on the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme's Special Needs Panel, a member of the PHAB Area Committee, a member of MENCAP and a governor of a special school. She is an experienced youth worker, particularly with physically handicapped young people, and has recently completed an Open University degree in Social Sciences.

Special interests: education (particularly the 1981 Education Act), the future of young people after 19, and the development of the Society.



Anne Davis, 33, is a housewife and mother of a 10 year-old son with cerebral palsy. A founder member of the Parent Handicap Information Group (PHIG) in Havering, she has been Chairman of the group for the past 6 years. At Regional level she is a member of the London Regional Committee and since 1984 has been a member of its Sub-Finance Committee (of which she is now Treasurer).

Special interests: promotion of the local group and expanding it to meet the local needs of families with disabled children.



Jan Hildreth, 52, is a banker, company director and business consultant. He has a son with cerebral palsy. He was a member of the Executive Council from 1980 to 1983, has served on the Finance Committee since 1980, and is a member of the Aids Advisory Committee and the Medical Screening Committee (of which he is chairman). He is honorary Treasurer of Contact a Family, which aims to promote the formation of local self-help groups of families with handicapped children, a school governor and occasional educational consultant.

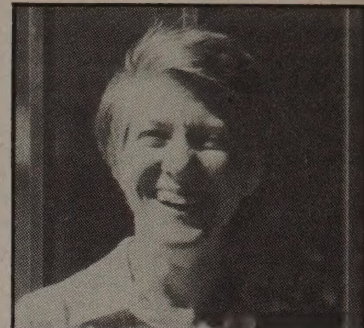
Special interests: education, particularly higher education.



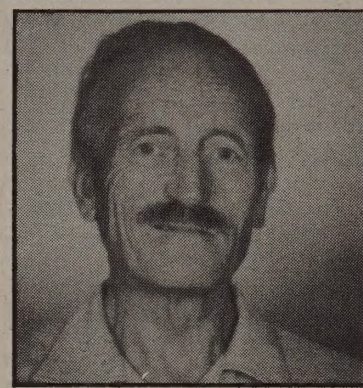
Joan Williams, 58, is head teacher of a nursery centre for handicapped and able-bodied children. She has a daughter with cerebral palsy. She is vice-Chairman and Secretary of the Urmston and District Spastics Society (in which she has been actively involved since 1962), Chairman of the North West Regional Committee, a member of the North West Regional Finance Committee and a member of the Regions Committee. She sat on the Greater Manchester Advisory Committee on Cerebral Palsy.

Special interests: the education of all children, handicapped or able-bodied.

Valerie Lang, 46, is a Higher Executive Officer at the Civil Aviation Authority and has cerebral palsy. She has been a member of the Executive Council since 1979 and during the last 3 years has sat on the following committees and working groups: the Alpha Advisory Committee, Boxes and Dolls Working Group, Constitution Working Group, Educational Advisory Committee, Medical Screening Groups, Personal Services Fund, Social Services Committee and the Executive Committee of the North London Spastics Association. She has also sat on British Rail's Advisory Panel on Transport for the Disabled and London Re-



gional Passengers' Committee. Special interests: the needs of cp people living in the community, helping disabled children cope with integrated education, and helping adults to find medical services.*



Richard Sharp, 67, is a chartered architect. He is Chairman of the West Regional Committee

Bunny Shaw, 70, is a retired chartered secretary and chartered shipbroker with wide experience of working for many major companies, including 22 years in South America. He has been Chairman of the Eastbourne and District Spastics Society since it re-formed in 1981, and is Chairman of the Sorrel Children's Trust which was set up to support the Sorrel Drive home of multiply-handicapped children. He is also Secretary and founder-member of the Sovereign Swimming Club for the Handicapped, the largest disabled swimming club in the South East, and Chairman of the Eastbourne and District Access

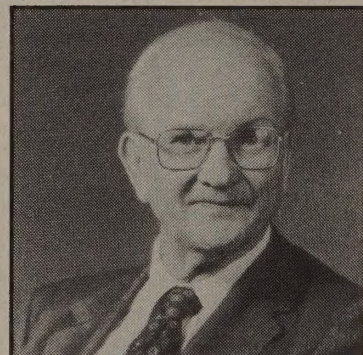
and the Cheltenham and District Spastics Association, which he helped to found in 1952, and sits on the Regions Committee and the Social Services Committee. He is a member of the Cirencester group Executive Committee and Vice-Chairman of the Gloucestershire Association for the Disabled. He has written a booklet, *Housing for Disabled People*.

Special interests: provision of small-scale residential accommodation for heavily handicapped adults and children (he is currently involved with 2 such projects).



Committee. In 1984 he was chosen as Eastbourne's first Citizen of the Year.

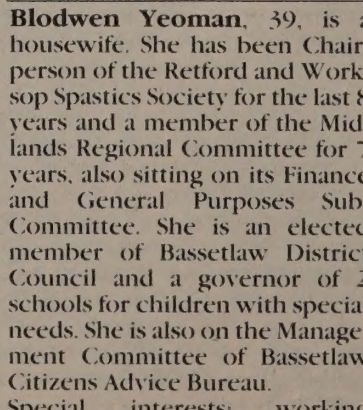
Special interests: swimming and water therapy, and the prevention of handicap.



Adrian Wright, 59, is a solicitor. He has sat on the Executive Council since 1982, and before that from 1972 to 1978. He has been a committee member of the Bristol and District Spastics Society since 1970 and was Hon-

orary Secretary from 1979 to 1982. He is a member of the Finance Committee, Social Services Committee, Alpha Committee and the Management Board and he also served on the Resources Committee from 1975 to 1980. He was Chairman of the Working Party on the Society's Constitution and also Chairman of the Association of '62 Clubs from 1967 to 1975. He is also a member of the Association of Lawyers for Mentally Handicapped People.

Special interests: the difficulties of adults with cp and their ageing parents, housing, conditions in work centres, and the problems of making provision for disabled people by wills or settlements.*



Blodwen Yeoman, 39, is a housewife. She has been Chairperson of the Retford and Work-sop Spastics Society for the last 8 years and a member of the Midlands Regional Committee for 7 years, also sitting on its Finance and General Purposes Sub-Committee. She is an elected member of Bassetlaw District Council and a governor of 2 schools for children with special needs. She is also on the Management Committee of Bassetlaw Citizens Advice Bureau.



Special interests: working through the Association of District Councils to try and prevent cuts in services that affect families with disabled members.

An asterisk * after the candidate's details indicates a retiring member of the Executive Council who is seeking re-election.

OUTLOOK

Books

The Costs of Caring: Families with Disabled Children

by Sally Baldwin
(Routledge and Kegan Paul, £17.95)

This book sets out to put a price tag on the extra costs to families created by a severely disabled child.

Baldwin uses a comparative approach, comparing income and expenditure patterns of families with disabled children against those without. Samples are drawn from the Family Fund register and compared with a control group drawn from the 1978 Family Expenditure Survey.

Although, as Baldwin admits, the two samples are not particularly well-matched, the comparison underlines the financial disadvantages suffered by families which include a severely disabled child. Amplifying suspicions long held, Baldwin shows that the incomes of such families tend to be lower on average, even where disability benefits are received.

At the same time, the disablement forces substantial increases in these families' expenditure patterns. The study concludes that the actual costs of caring for a severely disabled child at home far outweigh any provisions available through the benefits system and that social services provisions are quite inadequate.

Despite certain methodological shortcomings, Baldwin's study will prove a useful statistical reference work, and the liberal use of live quotes brings

home the plight of these families.

Baldwin suggests that the answer to the financial difficulties lies in providing a benefit which would offset the earnings a woman or mother loses because of the need to stay at home caring for the disabled child.

In the benefits context, this does a disservice to the Disability Costs Allowance and Income Scheme lobby. The Spastics Society has been campaigning for the introduction of a comprehensive scheme for some years.

In this respect Baldwin fails to consider the broader implications of her research, and unfortunately her policy options detract from what is otherwise a very competent study.

Linda Avery

Travellers' Guide for The Disabled 1985/6

Consultant Editor, Roy Thompson

(Published by The Automobile Association, Farnham House, Basingstoke, Hants.)

The Automobile Association has just published its 1985/6 edition of *The Travellers' Guide for the Disabled*. With wheelchair guests especially in mind, this lists more than 300 hotels, guest-houses, inns and other accommodation. These have been checked for entrance access, width of doors, ground floor accommodation, adequately sized lifts and manoeuvrability in toilets. Dining rooms have to be accessible, or there must be room service. The AA's usual star classification is used.

It is good to see specialised accommodation like John Grooms Hotels and Ashwellthorpe Hall (the Disabled Driver's Association's Hotel in Norfolk) being recognised by the AA as having reached hotel standards. Other accommodation

getting a mention is the Winged Fellowship Trust, the Trefoil Centre in Scotland, and Priory Cottage in Wiltshire - a small-holding offering disabled people special facilities and the delights of animals, crafts and a pony and trap which takes a wheelchair. Adapted self-catering cottages and flats and recommended sites for camping and caravanning are also included.

The disabled traveller abroad can find useful information on making reservations, travel by sea, motoring abroad and finding suitable accommodation in co-operation with the travel agent. The AA has listed the hotels of five European tours which all have one room suitable for a disabled person, and the motorway service areas which have facilities for disabled people.

Under the heading of "Useful Information", the guide sets out concessions for the disabled motorist like the orange badge scheme, tax exemptions, bridge and ferry concessions and details of cash benefits to facilitate ownership of a vehicle.

The invalid carriage driver is not forgotten and both DHSS approved garages and appliance centres have been listed.

As far as motoring in Britain is concerned, the book includes lists of motorway facilities and toilet facilities in principal towns. Places to visit have been selected from the AA's publication *Stately Homes, Museums, Castles and Gardens in Britain*, based on the proprietors' claims that their establishments are suitable for disabled people. But I have noted a few accessible "delights" missing.

Travellers' Guide for the Disabled is a valuable store of information, and is probably best used by cross-referencing with other holiday and access guides.

Merle Davies
Holiday Advisor

Caring: Experiences of looking after disabled relatives

Edited by Anna Briggs and Judith Oliver
(Routledge & Kegan Paul, £5.95)

"It is a book which contains far more than appears at face value. The reader will have to develop the skill of reading between the lines."

So state Anna Briggs and Judith Oliver in their introduction to *Caring*, a book in which 20 contributors offer autobiographical insights into the life of a carer.

Such a format necessarily entails repetitions. "Caring drains you physically and mentally... You can never 'switch off'; 'There seems no way I can recharge my batteries'; "...available for exploitation - for that is what care in the community means - the willing horse does the work".

The pace is pedestrian, and the temptation is to skip seemingly laborious detail. Yet on reflection, any frustration arising from reading the book only serves to illuminate more vividly the rift between the carer and the rest of society. For the carer, unlike the reader, has no choice but to persevere. Indeed, the majority of carers featured in this book are enslaved to so relentless a timetable that the very act of reading has become a luxury!

As a care attendant myself, I am aware of the unseen responsibility which renders an outwardly unexacting lifestyle a 24-hour profession; a profession unique in its insistence upon ex-

pertise in return for little or no formal training.

"Professionals do not realise we are essentially amateurs", writes one contributor, pointing out the paradox that a carer's very lack of free time denies him or her the opportunity of finding time-saving aids.

Health service, social service and political initiatives must be taken.

"My doctor's cheery 'You're coping marvellously. You don't need any help, do you?' was intended as a compliment, but it successfully cut me off from all sources of information and support - and without adequate information and people to talk to, fear takes over."

Many carers, are totally unaware that any back-up facilities or financial relief exists at all. One frighteningly ironic example in the book is that of a caring daughter not discovering that her elderly mother was eligible for attendance allowance until her own husband was registered blind!

Current policies are either confused or blatantly unsympathetic.

Married women are the most common of carers, perhaps finding themselves with a handicapped child to bring up or deciding to take on an elderly relative. Yet they may not claim Invalid Care Allowance.

Home Responsibilities Protection (accrediting NI contributions to women whose caring role robs them of conventional income) is withdrawn for any year in which a break of five weeks occurs, even if this is due to emergency hospital admission!

Home help, a popular back-up

as it combines relief for the carer without unnecessarily disturbing the dependant, is granted no DHSS subsidy if the dependant is a blood relative.

My own role as care attendant to an employee of The Spastics Society affords an interesting and varied lifestyle. Furthermore, by sharing the role with another carer, every intense eighteen hours shift is always rewarded with an equal number of hours off. Those accounts given in *Caring*, however, bear tribute to the overwhelming feeling of being isolated and trapped.

The book performs a desperately needed communication service. It informs the professionals of their inadequacies. It provides the carer with information and a forum in which experiences may be exchanged and problems solved.

In many ways, *Caring* is the "manifesto" of The Association of Carers, a self-help organisation founded by the two editors several years ago. Regrettably, the Association's address is not given, but in reading the book one realises the invaluable contribution it is making to society: "The Association of Carers has helped because there I am a person in my own right: a carer, yes - but not just a carer. In our local group we discover we are not alone, and we are still people."

If a society is judged by the way in which it cares for its needy, then a book which addresses itself to the care of carers deserves careful reading.

Philip Harris

The Association of Carers, Medway Homes, Balfour Road, Rochester, Kent. Tel: (0634) 813981



The Crucifixion scene in *Godspell*. The vocalisers stand on the platform behind and the young actors perform in front. Terrylene Theriot is at the bottom right.

Theatre Godspell

The Model Secondary School for the Deaf performed *Godspell* for 3 nights at Sadler's Wells Theatre last month. After the final curtain call on the first night, a jubilant Tim McCarty - the show's director and the company's mentor - was presented with a magnum of champagne to celebrate "the first production by a hearing and deaf company of a musical in a major London theatre."

It was a fitting conclusion to the very bubbly evening's entertainment provided by the ebullient group of young deaf people from Washington DC. Their interpretation of Stephen Schwartz's dated but dynamic musical, containing hits such as "Day by Day", was a joy to experience.

None of the cast spoke or sang, but the synchronization of action and voice between young performers and the professionals who vocalised the play at the back of the stage was most impressive.

Perhaps at times the many and various media were a little distracting. It was not unusual to have a scene in which one of the actors, using American sign language, narrated a story which other members of the cast acted

out together.

Meanwhile the proceedings were vocalised for the benefit of the hearing audience, and an interpreter - who was on stage throughout - rendered the whole thing intelligible to deaf British watchers. With so much activity it was not always easy to know where to focus attention.

So it is to the great credit of the cast that generally they managed to project their personalities so forcefully. A few were outstanding: William Byrd, who played Christ in a yellow grandad shirt, bleached torn jeans and black pumps; Allison Gompf, who like William is soon to be seen on the big screen in the film version of *Children of a Lesser God*; Monique Holt and Terrylene Theriot.

Ms Theriot is a talented writer as well as an accomplished dancer and actress, and last year her play *Imagine* was awarded first place in a major competition for handicapped young playwrights in America. As part of an exchange programme which saw *Abel's Sister* performed in New York, *Imagine* is to be produced at the Royal Court Theatre in London early next year.

Alan Durant

The National Theatre of the Deaf welcomes new members. Contact them at 44 Earlham Street, Covent Garden, London WC2H 9LA. Tel: 01-836 1477



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Please send me your brochure of wheelchairs.

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Address

Share Your Problems

With Margaret Morgan

Into the community—two problems solved

Moving into the community from a more institutional environment poses many new — and often unusual — problems. Two of our readers share with us some recent queries and the solutions they have found with the help of other agencies.

"I have at last moved from a residential unit into my own flat in the community. As I am severely physically disabled and need a good deal of personal and domestic help, there were a variety of difficulties to iron out before I could finally launch out and run my own home for the first time in my life.

One of my less knotty, but none-the-less important, problems was to find a way of contacting my CSV helper in an emergency when she is not actually in the flat with me. I have two helpers under the Independent Living Scheme run by Community Service Volunteers and each helper sleeps in the flat when on duty. But there are times during the day when she might be out shopping or when she can have an hour or two off because I do not need her. I like to have the flat to myself sometimes, too.

I put my problem to the occupational therapist at The Spastics Society's Family Services and Assessment Centre.

We came up with a "bleep" system, the Radio Pager, supplied by British Telecom on a rental basis. As I can't carry an ordinary telephone round with me in my wheelchair, I have bought a Radiophone (with some financial help from The Spastics Society)

which will be attached to my chair with industrial Velcro. Then, even if I should fall out of my chair, I am able to contact my helper, who carries her "bleep" receiver round with her, and she will return.

Having been in institutional care for very many years it can be quite daunting and unsettling not to have the immediate back-up of staff. The Radio Pager and other special equipment are certainly helpful, both practically and in allaying quite understandable fears and anxieties."

British Telecom has a series of leaflets giving details about special equipment and services for people with disabilities. For details about the Radio Pager telephone 01-836-9210. For other information ring the operator and ask for Freephone.

Community Service Volunteers run the Independent Living Scheme and many other services from 237 Pentonville Road, London N1. Tel: 01-278 6601

The Spastics Society's occupational therapist and other advisory services are available at the Family Services and Assessment Centre, 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 5HQ. Tel: 01-387 9571

"We have recently opened a staff flatlet for a small group of adults who have both physical and intellectual disabilities. We are keen to make the sitting room, kitchen/dining room and bedrooms comfortable and home-like and yet we need furniture that is strong, of the right height and easily washable.

What a difficult combination of requirements this proved to be! Most of the furniture that we looked at was so dull and "geriatric".

Then I remembered the Disabled Living Foundation and when I telephoned the



Simon Crompton

information officer she was most helpful and gave me several useful contacts.

One firm, Shackletons (Carlinghow) Ltd have a good selection of suitable furniture and we have now bought a Queen Anne-style suite with two 2-seater high backed settees and three wing armchairs, upholstered in dark cherry vinyl, with a leather-type finish. All very comfortable and domestic, yet strong, washable and hard-wearing.

We also needed plastic covers for mattresses and pillows and we found a most helpful supplier in Home Nursing Supplies Ltd.

It really does seem so important to go on persevering in the search for furniture and other equipment that is "just like home", and not be forced into accepting the practical, dull and stereotyped alternatives."

Disabled Living Foundation, 380/384 Harrow Road, London W9 2HU, tel: 01-289 6111, welcomes enquiries by post and telephone between 9.30 am and 5.00 pm from Monday to Friday. Visits are also welcomed, but you are strongly advised to make an appointment.

Shackletons (Carlinghow) Ltd, 501 Bradford Road, Batley, West Yorks. WF17 8LN, tel: (0924) 474430

Home Nursing Supplies Ltd, Headquarters Road, West Wilts. Trading Estate, Westbury, Wilts, tel: (0373) 822313

9801 (evenings and weekends) or 01-798 3801 (day).

Find-a-Friend

29 YEAR-OLD MAN, slightly backward and living in Glasgow whose interests include cycling, listening to music and youth-hostelling, seeks a girl with similar interests, preferably living in the Glasgow area. Please write to Box No 122, Disability Now, address on page 12.

FEMALE PENFRIEND WANTED for 31 year-old spastic man living in Co Cavan, Ireland in a lovely bungalow. Catholic. Interests are writing, reading, TV and music and going for long walks. Great sense of humour. Would love to hear from any Catholic, aged 21-30, with equal sense of humour and with friendship and marriage in mind. All letters will be answered. Please write to Box No 119, Disability Now, address on page 12.

PENFRIENDS WANTED by 40 year-old man living in a hostel. Interests include music, reading, visiting historical buildings and art. Please contact Robert Dean, Merlyn House, West End Road, West End, Southampton, Hants.

CZECH WOMAN 32 years-old, wheelchair-bound and a Doctor of Philosophy, would like to correspond with someone in a similar position. Write to Vendula Neumannova, "Vinohradska" 65, 120 00 Praha 2, Czechoslovakia.

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ASHLEY MOBILITY, FREEPOST, BIRMINGHAM, B25 8HY. Tel: 021-772 5364.

What's On

Courses at Castle Priory

Counselling Adolescents with a Visual Handicap — a further course developing the subjects covered in the course held in March and including additional work on group dynamics for teachers, social workers or careers officers. 18-20 October. Tuition £43, residence £37.

Technology for Children and Adults with Special Needs — a basic course concerned with the broad range of technical aids and micro-computers being developed for communication, learning and leisure. A multi-disciplinary part workshop of interest to all those new to the field. 20-25 October. Tuition £95, residence £92.50.

Teaching the Child with Cerebral Palsy to Use the Hands — a multidisciplinary course for teachers, therapists and care staff. It is a repeat of the course led by Ester Cotton in 1983 and earlier this year. 25-27 October. Tuition £40, residence £37.

For more information about any of these courses write to Castle Priory College, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 0HE. Tel: (0491) 37551

Conferences and Leisure

The Boundary Club for Camden, a new PHAB club for 6-14 year-olds, is holding a "come and try" open day on Saturday 14 September from 11am to 5pm at 48 Boundary Road, London NW8. All are welcome to come along and join in with art, drama and music workshops, sports, video, games and body-popping. There will also be a barbecue and disco. Parents can come to see what the club has to offer. For further information contact Nicky Davies, West Hampstead Project, St Georges Annexe, Linstead Street, London NE6. Tel: 01-624 0915

ACTIVE Inaugural Meeting is on Tuesday 17 September, 7.30 pm at The Playgroup Building, Townsend Road, Minehead, Somerset. Chairperson is Dr Nina Leech and the speaker will be Roger Jefcoate. ACTIVE is an organisation which encourages the development of play, leisure and communication aids for people with special needs. For further details contact Kathleen Sunderland, Withdean, Patricks Way, Staplehay, Taunton, Somerset. Tel: (0823) 81112

1985 Conference of the International Federation for Hydrocephalus and Spina Bifida is being held at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology from 25-28 September. Topics covered will include genetic counselling, spinal fusion, incontinence problems, employment prospects, computers, fashion and travel. It will be of interest to parents, disabled people, professionals and the general public. For further information contact ASBAH, 22 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0EP. Tel: 01-388 1382

Education Act 1981 — Making it work is a regional day conference taking place on 26 September at Sheffield City Polytechnic. Organised jointly by The Children's Legal Centre and The Spastics Society's Centre for Studies on Integration in Education, it is aimed at everyone concerned with the workings of the new law — parents, professionals, voluntary organisations, education officers and others. Fee is £8 (£4 for parents and the unwaged). For further information and application form contact CSIE, The Spastics Society, 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 5HQ. Tel: 01-387 9571.

House Adaptations for People with a Mental Handicap is a seminar being held on 27 September at the King's Fund Centre, 126 Albert Street, London NW1 7NE. It will look at the assessment, organisation funding and design of adaptations and will be of interest to all those working with mentally handicapped people in a community setting. For further details and application form contact Alice Gamlen, Seminar Officer, CEH, 126 Albert Street, London NW1 7NE. Tel: 01-482 2247.

Music Making for People With Disabilities is a series of classes starting on Saturday 28 September at Morley College, 61 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1. It is for both beginners and those who've played before. Audrey Podmore gives the individual help and encouragement needed in playing instruments. There are concessionary fees, where appropriate, for Inner Londoners. Enquire about help with transport. For further information telephone Audrey Podmore. Tel: 01-789 0551

The Watercress Line is holding a Special Day for the Disabled on 29 September. Additional staff and guides will be available to help with parties and there will be a chance to look inside the locomotives in the engine shed. Make a reservation for wheelchair accommodation on the trains to avoid disappointment. £1.50 return for disabled adults, 75p for disabled children. For booking form and further information contact Judith James, Marketing Officer, Watercress Line, Winchester & Alton Railway plc, Alresford Station, Alresford, Hants SO24 9JG. Tel: (096273) 4200

Effects of the Fish Report on Lambeth Children. John Fish will be at the Assembly Hall, Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton Hill, London SW2 (wheelchair accessible) on Tuesday 1 October at 8pm to discuss the recommendations of the recent report for the integration of children with special needs into mainstream schools. Other speakers include Lambeth and IEA educationalists. Organised by Lambeth Action for Handicapped Children. For further details contact Janet Hughes, tel: 01-622 1847.

Activity Weeks. The Association for Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus is holding two activity holidays at the Stackpole Trust's centre in South Wales as part of International Youth Year. The main activities will be horse riding, rock climbing, abseiling and water sports. Dates are 5-12 October and 26 October-2 November. The price per week will be £96 maximum with the chance of reductions if grants are made by various trusts. (contact ASBAH for advice on where you may be able to apply for individual funding). For further information contact Paul Cooper, ASBAH, 22 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0EP. Tel: 01-338 1382

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used. For further details write to Over-shot Hill, Colne Engine, Cochester, Essex CO6 2HX

VITESSE MARK 3 WHEELCHAIR. Recliner, with elevating leg rest. Kerb climber. 16 in. width seat. Colour: burgundy. 18 months-old. £800 o.n.o. Tel: 01-723

CEREBRAL PALSY SPORT ANNOUNCES

THE BIG SWIM

Regional Swimming Galas for people with cerebral palsy 1985/86

November 10

North West Gala, Everton Park Sports Centre, Liverpool

November 16

Midland Gala, Nottingham

November 30

South West Gala, Devon and Cornwall Constabulary Pool, Exeter

December 1

North East Gala, Dolphin Centre, Darlington

January 25

South East Gala, (venue to be confirmed)

For further details and official entry forms contact:

Howard Bailey, Leisure Services Officer,

The Spastics Society, 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 5HQ

Telephone: 01. 387 9571

Announcements

The Handicapped Person in the Community (course P251) is an Open University multimedia course studying the radical changes happening in the field of disability and the issues involved in the integration of handicapped people into the community. 1986 is the last year the course will be run. Everyone interested in the problems faced by handicapped people will find the course of value. Closing date for completed application forms for 1986 is 7 October. For further information, free guide and an application form contact The Associate Student Central Office, The Open University, PO Box 76, Milton Keynes MK7 6AN. Tel: (0908) 653003.

Want to go to Bogota? The Abilympics for physically disabled people will be held in Bogota, Colombia from 1-5 October, with contests in 12 categories, including computer programming, advertising design, wood carving, TV repair, cabinet making and weaving. The outward flight from Paris is on 28 September. The European Commission pays for the flight, but other expenses must be met by the competitor. Contact Peter Mitchell, RADAR, 25 Mortimer Street, London W1N 8AB. Tel: 01-637 5400, ext 229.

The Spastics Society's latest poster can be found inserted in this issue of *Disability Now*. If you would like more copies, either landscape or portrait, contact Carmen Rebello, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. Tel: 01-636 5020, ext 202.

FREEPHONE DHSS is a free telephone information and advice service on DHSS and benefit services. It is available throughout the country. Just dial 100 and ask the operator for FREEPHONE DHSS.

The Mobility Bus has made changes to five of the present routes it runs on in the London Boroughs of Newham and Waltham Forest. The bus is for passengers who cannot easily use conventional buses and has some seats for able-bodied people accompanying those in wheelchairs. For details of times and new routes contact Forest District London Buses. Tel: 01-518 0411.

Campaigning Issues is a new series of leaflets from The Spastics Society. The first one, Discrimination and Disabled People, is available now. It will look at the facts and offer suggestions on what action an individual or a group can take. Free, from the Lobbying Department, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

Housing Design Sheets is a design pack by Stephen Thorpe and published by the Centre on Environment for the Handicapped, containing check lists for architects, occupational therapists and housing officers on aspects of house design for disabled people. Also included are further references and a section on CEH services, including the new CEH Architectural Advisory service. Price £2.50 (including postage) from CEH, 126 Albert Street, London NW1 7NF. Tel: 01-482 2247.

A national fundraising raffle is being organised by The Stars Organisation for Spastics. First prize is a Ford Fiesta, and there are a host of other prizes. Tickets cost 25p each and the draw will take place on 31 October. Contact SOS, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. Tel: 01-637 9683.



Ruby Stepnitz

Ruby Stepnitz, chairman of the West Sussex Spastics Group for 8 years, died on 20 July, 5 months after she relinquished her post due to ill-health.

Originally from Bury in Lancashire, Ruby moved to the Middle East in the late fifties, where she raised her family of four.

Returning to England in 1967 to educate her family, she found and fell in love with West Wittering near Chichester and quickly became a valued member of the community.

She encouraged her family to develop their hobbies and ideas, no matter how diverse, and accumulated at one time 9 dogs, 2 cats, 2 rabbits, 16 guinea-pigs, 2 budgies and 2 goldfish. Her own hobbies included wine-making, collecting antique lace, needlework and gardening.

Ruby's home was always open house with a great welcome for everyone. She really enjoyed meeting people and never refused a challenge.

This untiring enthusiasm inspired us all at the West Sussex Spastics Group. Her willingness to "have a go" resulted in a group of disabled people enjoying a memorable holiday in Belgium 5 years ago.

More recently, it also resulted in the establishment of our training workshop for disabled school leavers, giving them experience in woodwork, printing and crafts.

She was also a Friend of The St Giles Centre for physically handicapped people, CRYPT, and the Sussex Otters swimming club for disabled people.

We will all miss her sympathy, understanding and practical suggestions as well as the joy in sharing good news with her.

Pat Meadows
Vice chairman,
West Sussex Spastics Group



There's no such thing as a free lunch - and *Disability Now* is no exception.

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LOCAL GROUP NEWS

Edited by Simon Crompton

Coventry and its surrounding area will get a badly needed aids centre, thanks to a partnership between Coventry and District Spastics Society and Coventry City Council.

Chairman of the Coventry group, Peter Collard, handed over cheques for £11,000 to the Lord Mayor of Coventry on 29 July. This will pay for half the cost of equipping the centre, a former children's home in Cheylesmore. The City Council is paying for most of the conversion and supplying the building.

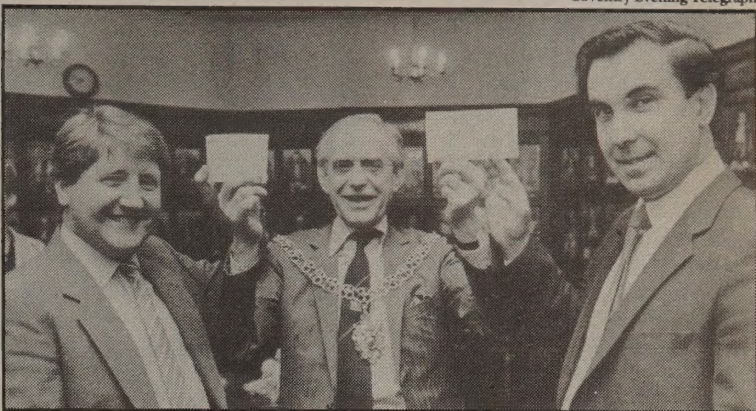
It should be completed next month.

Coventry and District Spastics Society's home visitor, Ethel Arthur, is convinced that there is a real need for such a centre, where people can get advice from therapists and try out equipment which helps independent living.

"At the moment, our members

Social services and Coventry group become working partners

Coventry Evening Telegraph



Peter Collard (right), chairman of the Coventry group, handed the cheques totalling £11,000 to the Lord Mayor of Coventry, Bill McKernan (centre) and social services chairman Nick Nolan on 29 July.

have to be taken to Birmingham," she says. "I really feel that people with all types of disability often don't have the aids they need simply because they don't get a chance to try them. This new centre will be a super thing."

Coventry and District Spastics Society originally planned to

start its own mobile aids unit. But after a chance conversation between the Society's liaison officer, Penny Collard and Elizabeth Knight, the social services principal assistant head occupational therapist, the two organisations decided to join forces because their aims were so similar.

Premature babies get help from local group



Martin Wareing, Honorary Appeals Secretary for the group, examines the equipment at Witherington Special Care Baby Unit.

The Greater Manchester Spastics Society has launched an appeal to buy equipment which could help prevent handicap in babies.

It hopes to raise £3,000 by the winter to buy a machine to monitor oxygen in premature babies at the special care baby

unit at Witherington Hospital, Manchester.

"We see preventative medicine as an important part of our work," says Stuart Wroe, Greater Manchester Spastics Society appeals secretary.

"It started with The Spastics Society's Save a Baby Campaign, and around five years ago we bought an oxygen monitor, a heart rate monitor and a respiration monitor for St Mary's Hospital."

The groups latest appeal got off to a soggy start at the Manchester Show, where they had a stall. But despite the rain, and thanks partly to Dangermouse, who flew in specially from Heathrow, they managed to raise £280.



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Disabled people go on the defensive

Simon Crompton

The first course in the country designed to teach self-defence to people with disabilities drew to a successful and thumping conclusion last month in Camden.

And instructor Chief Superintendent Sheila Ward from Streatham Police was so impressed with what could be achieved in 14 classes that she hopes to train 60 other constabulary officers in how to teach the skill to disabled people.

"I was surprised at what disabled people could do, and the co-ordination they have," she says. "It's an area which has been very much neglected in the past."

The classes were started by Jan Gould, from the Camden Crack MS Group and Chairman of Disabled in Camden. "I got the idea after a member of Crack MS told me that she had been assaulted on the street. She knew exactly how to defend herself, but realised no-one had ever told her what to do next if you couldn't run away."

Jan found existing self-defence courses were not prepared to take on disabled people. So Camden Crack MS decided to start some themselves, with the help of local special constables trained in self-defence.

The police instructors had no experience of teaching the skill to people with disabilities, so there was learning to be done on both sides. They had to adapt conventional self-defence techniques to individual disabilities.

"It wasn't until I worked with Jan that I realised you could use a wheelchair to throw someone," says Sheila Ward. "A walking cane can also be used as a weapon, but none of the handicapped people here dreamt of that because they'd become so accustomed to thinking of it as a walking aid."

Brian Munday is one of the 12 regulars at the classes. He uses a stick to walk. "To be honest, I first came to the classes because I was curious," he says. "I couldn't see that anything could be done."

"But a lot more can be done than I thought, and there's been



Course founder Jan Gould parries a blow from police officer Judith Tucker.

a lot of improvement as we've gone along. It gives you a bit more confidence, knowing that you *could* hurt someone if you had to."

Kathleen Turner, who has cerebral palsy, also thinks the course is good news.

"It's worth knowing any skill, and if there's just one thing you remember from the classes, you might have to use it one day," she says.

The British Crime Survey shows that old and disabled people are not especially at risk as targets, says Sheila Ward. "But what's important is their perception of reality. If disabled people perceive that they are vulnerable and can't defend themselves, then that's a terrible erosion of their quality of life."

Jan Gould is planning another series of classes in Camden. If you would like more information, contact her at Camden Crack MS. Tel: 01-435 5748.

Breakfast club

The Spastics Society has joined with Dr Barnardo's, MIND and MENCAP in organising joint "breakfast meetings" at the Party Conferences during September and October.

The charities have come together in recognition of the joint problems they face in attempting to improve community services for mentally ill and mentally handicapped people.

Representatives will be hoping to have constructive meetings with Members of Parliament from all the major parties. They will be putting to them points made recently by the Select Committee Report on Community Care.

Having a breather

This issue of *Disability Now* has been reduced to 12 pages. This is to allow editorial staff time to go on holiday!

Disability Now

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Charity income is on the up

Charity income rose dramatically by almost 17 per cent last year, and there is little evidence that the African famine has taken funds from charities outside the international relief sector.

This is one of the findings of the Charities Aid Foundation's annual statistics examining trends in voluntary organisations.

The figures cover too early a period to fully reflect the changes in giving patterns resulting from the crises in Ethiopia and Sudan, but Oxfam received more voluntary income than any other charity in 1983/4, passing the National Trust which has been the frontrunner since 1982.

The NSPCC also showed a large increase in voluntary income, jumping from 15th to 9th place as a result of a very successful centenary appeal.

The Spastics Society came 12th in terms of voluntary income, compared with 14th last year. Its charitable expenditure was the fifth largest of any of the 200 charities analysed in the statistics.

This year the statistics report for the first time on how much support voluntary bodies get from the local statutory sector.

Local authorities gave some £351 million to charities, but that is only just over 1 per cent of total local government expenditure.

Central government grants totalled £183 million, an increase of 14.3 per cent on the previous year.

Charity Statistics 1984/85 is available from the Charities Aid Foundation, 48 Pembury Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2JD. Price £11 plus postage and packing.

Video dictionary for deaf children

A deaf research psychologist has devised a revolutionary way of teaching deaf children and adults using video and computer technology combined.

Chris Jones' Interactive Video Dictionary took 18 months to develop at the Donaldson School for the Deaf in Edinburgh.

It works by controlling a video disc through a computer. Any word can be typed onto the keyboard, and the video disc provides a visual explanation of the word - a picture or a film - along with the word in sign language.

The word is also spoken to enable parents of deaf children to speak sign language.

Children's books in the form of Teletext can be generated by the BBC microcomputer and appear on the screen in "pages". By pressing a computer key, the video disc shows the definition of each word. The disc has a huge storage capacity, holding more than 50,000 picture frames on each side.

"Interactive video is far less time consuming than traditional

teaching methods," says Chris Jones, "and it's invaluable in explaining difficult concepts such as tenses. Deaf children cannot easily link action with words but interactive video solves the problem by creating a world to which the child can relate. It's also great fun."

Chris Jones has also used the BBC's Children's Favourites video disc to assist reading and comprehension, with questions following each subtitled video sequence.



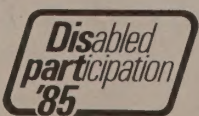
Chris Jones demonstrates one of his programmes to pupils at the Donaldson School.

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- Supported by ASBAH, Disability Alliance E.R.A. and PHAB
- The Venue Westminster Cathedral Conference Centre Saturday 30 November 1985
- For further details contact Chris Davies, Disability Now, 12 Park Crescent London W1N 4EQ Telephone 01-636 5020



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